

APPROVED ON _____ APRIL 19, 2007 _____

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CAC MEETING**

MARCH 12, 2007

PORTSMOUTH CITY HALL

6:00 P.M.

Present: Chairperson Nancy Emerson, Bob Layton, Jean Pecunies, Lynne Langley,
Stephen Lichtenstein

Absent: Algene Bailey (called), William Thorpe (called), Dani Rooney (called)

Staff: David Moore, Program Manager

Chairperson Emerson opened the meeting and recognized David Moore who provided information to the committee regarding the FY 2007-2008 entitlement grant. He indicated that HUD had released the new allocations and that the CDBG program would be receiving a total of \$672,397; a less than one percent reduction from FY 2006-2007. Chairperson Emerson then introduced the evening's first presenter for the FY 2007-2008 Public Service Agency Grant Program.

Judy Bunnell, Community Services Division Director for the Portsmouth Housing Authority (PHA), spoke on behalf of the Senior Center. Ms. Bunnell thanked the committee for its past support of its grant applications and noted that there have been several organizational and funding changes at the Senior Center. She said that the Senior Center will no longer be receiving funds from the Portsmouth Housing Authority to run its programs. This has caused the agency to restructure its programs and increase funding from other sources at the same time that additional seniors access the Senior Center's services. The Senior Center is increasing its fundraising efforts by adding 10 fundraising events throughout the year and seeking funds from outside groups such as the Portsmouth Hospital Guild. Ms. Bunnell said that the Senior Center has benefited from the addition of a new activities coordinator and has seen an increase of 61 people attending its programs in the last quarter. Ms. Bunnell said that the center's goal is to help families keep seniors in their homes while still making them feel part of the community, but she stressed they need funding to achieve their goal. Ms. Bunnell said that many people seeking services are not from Portsmouth but have moved here to be with family and need contact with other seniors in their new surroundings. Chairperson Emerson thanked Ms. Bunnell for her presentation.

Chairperson Emerson then recognized Ms. Meredith Blowen, Director of Family Services of the Community Child Care Center (CCCC). Ms. Blowen explained that the CCCC's mission is to provide both child care, support for families and advocacy for child care issues. She said the agency was again applying for funds to be able to provide tuition assistance for families who earn low or moderate incomes. She indicated that additional funding in this area will allow the agency to provide tuition assistance to more families. She noted that the agency was the first child care agency in the state to receive the "Licensed Plus" certification and that it was a recent grantee of a \$40,000 grant from the

New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. Last year, the agency served 275 children and 76% came from Portsmouth. Chairperson Emerson thanked Ms. Blowen for her presentation.

Chairperson Emerson then recognized Kathy Beebe of Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS). Ms. Beebe explained that her agency's services are focused on support for victims and prevention of sexual assault and outreach to the community about sexual violence issues. She said a new office dedicated to Development and Outreach has resulted from a fundraising audit of the agency completed last year. She said the agency is also planning increased collaboration with A Safe Place and noted that other similar agencies in New Hampshire are dedicated to both domestic and sexual violence. She said a recent funding cut from the United Way has refocused the agency from labor intensive fundraising events to seeking private support through contributions and gift giving. Chairperson Emerson thanked Ms. Beebe for her presentation.

Chris Sterndale spoke on behalf of the Emergency and Transitional Shelter Program at Cross Roads House. Mr. Sterndale informed the committee that there has been a modest decrease in the number of persons served. He said that this is likely the result of a new policy which has been in place for six-months relating to clients who are relocating to New Hampshire. He said that Cross Roads House is not a relocation service and that many people seek shelter at Cross Roads House while they transition to a new life. He said that transition can take a long time and does not constitute an emergency situation if a person is leaving behind benefits and a social network in another town or city. He said this policy may be responsible for a 5-10% decrease in clientele served. He explained that clients continue to have difficulty in finding permanent housing at affordable rents; but that the rental market has been softening. He indicated that Cross Roads is going to experience a 5% cut in overall funding due to a decrease in federal Emergency Food and Shelter funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). He said the agency would absorb this cut by reducing expenditures in other areas. Chairperson Emerson thanked Mr. Sterndale for his presentation.

Chairperson Emerson then discussed the site walk to Cross Roads House that she and Mr. Layton went on in January. Mr. Moore invited Mr. Sterndale to summarize the capital project Cross Roads House is planning for its facility at 600 Lafayette Road for members of the committee who were unable to attend the site walk. Earlier in the FY 2007-2008 budget planning phase, Mr. Sterndale wrote to the committee requesting funds in support of the capital project. Mr. Sterndale invited all members of the committee to contact him to arrange a visit Cross Roads House at their convenience. In general, Mr. Sterndale said that three out of four buildings will be demolished and rebuilt into one large building to provide better services to Cross Roads House clients. He said many of the agency's challenges will be aided through a cleaner, healthier, and safer shelter. He noted that, overall, the agency will have 10% fewer beds and the project will result in better services and shorter stays for shelter clients. A general discussion took place about the renovation project.

After the presentations, Chairperson Emerson moved to accept the minutes for the February 8, 2007 meeting. Mr. Lichtenstein moved that the minutes be accepted and the motion was seconded by Mr. Layton. All voted in favor.

Mr. Moore then handed out revised FY 2007-2008 grant request spreadsheets to the committee. He noted a correction in the grants requested column, and a correction in the FY 2006-2007 grants approved column.

Chairperson Emerson then began a discussion about all of the presentations and the grant review process in general. She indicated that in past years the committee has looked at policies regarding funding grants from more than one agency, prioritizing community needs for public services, and identifying agencies particularly adept at raising funds without governmental support. In general, the committee discussed how the agencies which are funded from year to year, meet the requirements of the CDBG program and the needs of the community. Mr. Lichtenstein asked if staff was satisfied with all of these agencies from a grants management perspective. Mr. Moore said that all agencies comply with the subrecipient agreement and HUD regulations and that staff monitors agencies regularly. He said that the current roster of public service agencies supported through the public service agency grants all meet the HUD requirements and funds are expended for their stated purposes.

In general, the committee discussed how there are not many options for funding for FY 2007-2008 because only the agencies who received funds in FY 2006-2007 have applied. Mr. Layton suggested that the committee recommend that all agencies be level funded. The committee discussed the appropriateness of funding each agency at its FY 2006-2007 grant amount and generally agreed with Mr. Layton. Chairperson Emerson noted that the additional \$1,000, could be awarded to agencies with particular funding challenges resulting from cuts in federal programs. She said that Aids Response – Seacoast and the Portsmouth Housing Authority Senior Center should be considered for those funds. Mr. Lichtenstein asked if any member of the committee thought an agency should not be funded. The committee agreed that no agency should lose their funding in FY 2007-2008.

Chairperson Emerson adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.